

# **Liberals Gone Assad Still Here World Moves Toward Peace in Astana**

[New Era World News](#)

ON DECEMBER 30, PRIOR TO THE NEW YEAR, *New Era* reported that the Russian, Turkish, and Iranian foreign ministers gathered in Moscow to discuss the situation in Syria. As a result of the meeting, the three announced their willingness to facilitate future negotiations between Damascus and Syrian opposition groups.

As a result of the meeting, the Troika issued a document referred to by the New York Times as ["The Moscow Declaration"](#). Among its eight articles, the "Declaration" states:

- **Iran, Russia and Turkey express their readiness to facilitate and become the guarantors of the prospective agreement being negotiated between the Syrian Government and the opposition.** They invited all other countries with the influence on the situation on the ground to do the same.

Consequently, On December 30 the Assad government and the main Syrian opposition groups agreed to a nationwide ceasefire. [Turkey's Anadolu News Agency](#), reported that Russia and Turkey agreed to act jointly in order to guarantee implementation of the ceasefire agreement; they have been actively monitoring violations since that date.

The Russians, Iranians, and Turks decided to act without the United States. **Under President Obama, the United States neocons suffered a humiliating defeat, an international debacle far from their vision for a New American Century – The US was being taken out of the game and placed on the bench by**

**the Russians.**

*“Russia (however) said the United States could join a fresh peace process once President-elect Donald Trump takes office on Jan. 20” ([Reuters, Dec 30, 2016](#)).*

Russian Secretary of State Sergey Lavrov stressed these sentiments in a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin:

*“I would like to express the hope that as soon as the administration of Donald Trump takes office, they will also be able to join these efforts [to settle the Syrian crisis] so that we could jointly work in this direction” ([CNN News](#)).*

Russia has in fact extended an invitation to the Trump administration to send a representative to attend the talks in Astana. Now that he is president, he will face opposition from neo-conservative and neo-liberal statesmen and from ranking officials in the Pentagon and intelligence community, men and women opposed to any cooperation with the Russians.

**We will soon find out what the United States under President Trump is going to do – the Astana meeting began yesterday (January 23) in Kazakhstan as scheduled.** It is the first time, since the conflict began six years ago, that high officials from the Syrian government have sat at a negotiating table with high officials representing the armed opposition to discuss cessation of a war that has claimed over 400,000 lives.

At the outset of the meeting (being held at the Rixos President Astana Hotel) Iran, Turkey, and Russia welcomed the various delegates including representatives of the Syrian government and members of armed opposition groups opposed to the Syrian government. The Syrian government is being represented by Bashar Jaafari (Syria's Permanent Representative to the UN) who voiced extreme difficulty

sitting down with countrymen who have helped ravage Syria supported by, an cooperating with, an overwhelming influx of foreign terrorists backed by an immense amount of foreign aid and assistance:

*“This has been extremely painful for us to sit in the same room with other Syrians linked to foreign agendas and working for foreign powers.”*

Delegates stressed the situation cannot be solved by military intervention. Although the military is necessary to assure adherence to the cease-fire-peace initiative, the imbroglio must be revolved diplomatically, a process that will involve the United Nations.

*“There is no military solution to the Syrian conflict...it can only be solved through a political process based on the implementation of the UN Security Council resolution 2254 in its entirety.*

The cooperating powers all agreed to the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of the Syrian nation, implying that **they will uphold the right of Syria as a sovereign nation**, a nation entitled to determine for itself who its leaders will be and who will be invited to fight alongside it against common enemies.

*“The delegations of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey, in line with the Joint Statement of their Foreign Ministers made in Moscow, on December 20, 2016 and the UN Security Council resolution 2336...”reaffirm their commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic as a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, non-sectarian and democratic state”*

**It appears as forecast in our earlier report that the Syrian**

**High Negotiation Committee (HNC)** the umbrella group for Syrian opposition groups has not been invited. The **“HNC is a Saudi-backed and formulated umbrella organization.”** Given the fact that the HNC is headquartered in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, home of Sunni radicalism, of Shariah Law and Wahhabi and Salafist ultra-extremism led by Saud monarchs who rule their country with a tight fist, it seemed clear that they would not be invited. For centuries the Sauds have been locked in deadly combat with Shiite Iran and have been the prime supporters of jihad and terrorism in Syria. It is hard to imagine a group supported by the Sauds involved in a peace process that will strengthen the hands of its enemies viz., Iran, Russia and Turkey. Moreover, the HNC, supported by Great Britain has insisted, that **President Assad must be removed from office within six months of any transition.** This is contrary to the Syrian initiated democratic process envisioned by the Russians and the Syrian people themselves who voted overwhelmingly in Assad's favor in 2014.

Moreover, according to [Aljazeera News](#)

*“The HNC would reject any agreement struck by Russia and the US if it largely differed from the HNC's terms.”*

To bolster military operations to secure the cease-fire (in spite of opposition groups such as the HNC and other terrorists *not* invited to Astana), it was agreed yesterday (Jan 23) that (1) **Iran will cooperate *militarily*** with Turkey and Russia to assure the ceasefire and (2) that Syria's indigenous opposition forces will be separated from the various terrorist organizations operating within the country (al-Nusra-ISIL-Daesh), organizations supported by Saudi Arabia and represented by the HNC. The terrorist groups will be subject to the combined wrath of Iran, Russia and Turkey who reiterated their “determination to fight jointly against... them.”

This in itself is an extremely significant development. **In the past Saudi Arabia has brokered deals with Turkey to keep Iran in check; now, it appears that Turkey is switching allegiance. By Turkey now combining with Iran, it is Saudi Arabia that is checked and potentially threatened.** The Saudis are further feeling the heat due to Russia's combining its forces with both The Turks and the Persians (Iran). Implicitly, Saudi Arabia is being warned. If tensions do not cease; it is highly likely that Saudi Arabia will find bombs dropping on the Arabian Peninsula and Trump might not be there to intervene, esp. if he is working with the Russians to bring peace to the Middle East.

It appears that the Astana meeting is intended to foster peace between the Assad government and Syrian opposition, that is with opposition from Syrian citizens (not imported terrorists) who have issues with the government. Once these issues are resolved, the UN can take up negotiations with the terrorists who are unruly even at a meeting. In all likelihood, Syria is being united, internal grievances mollified and divisions healed before the Russians, Turks and Iranians begin pounding the terrorists into oblivion – as Trump has stated “I would bomb the shit out of ISIS”.

Before this can happen, bombing the “shit” out of ISIS, Assad wants to unify his country and mitigate any grievances to assure the full support of his countrymen in the war that is about to be unleashed on the terrorists unless the UN can somehow avoid the coming conflict, a conflict that will presumably involve the US aligning with the Russians, Turks, Iranians and Syrians against ISIL-Deash-al Nusra *et al*.

Tuesday's meeting concluded with the three guarantors issuing a join-statement supporting the upcoming UN Geneva talks and

the participation of Syrian opposition forces (not necessarily the terrorists) within them.

## Meeting Concluded but Not Over

The January 23 meeting was open to the press. Today, Jan 24, participants are meeting *en banc* behind closed doors to engage in further discussions between the Syrian government and opposition forces. Apparently, President Trump has been contacted and responded positively; **it is reported that the United States has a representative there.** According to [Sputnik](#):

*“Damascus delegation is set to speak first, followed by the armed opposition, Russia, Iran, Turkey, **the United States** and the United Nations.*

Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Foreign Minister of host Kazakastan, is optimistic:

*“I am confident that the meeting in Astana will provide the necessary conditions allowing to find the acceptable solution of Syrian crisis for all the interested parties in the framework of Geneva process under the auspices of the UN and will be a significant step forward to peace and stability in Syria. I wish you successful and fruitful negotiations....Kazakhstan believes that the only correct way to resolve the situation in Syria should be negotiations based on mutual trust and understanding.”*

Abdrakhmanov also stressed his wishes for a successful start that will lead to a breakthrough opening the way to the diplomatic side of things to occur in Geneva under UN auspices on February 8, 2017.

*“We are providing you with the platform and the conditions to start negotiations... The next few days are very important,”*

*the delegates he said "should use this opportunity to ensure a real breakthrough."*

The Astana round involves representatives of the armed opposition whereas the Geneva round will be a political process involving diplomats. **The Astana round is primarily a military round involving maintenance of the ceasefire that will prepare the way for the Geneva Round in February.** Highly significant is the role Russia is playing in cooperation with the UN. **It is Russian military might in cooperation with Iran and Turkey that the UN is relying on to bring the contending parties to Geneva** to engage in higher diplomatic talks. In the past, meetings were attempted in Geneva but armed opposition groups refused to participate. Astana therefore represents a breakthrough, and if the talks proceed well (along with a successful ceasefire) there is hope for significant progress in Geneva.

As a result the Astana talks will focus primarily on military issues. Strategies and agreements intended to enhance the volatile ceasefire are expected to be the main issue on the agenda. These agreements, if reached, will pave the way for a political settlement of the Syrian crisis in Geneva. Sergey Lavrov, Foreign Minister of Russia emphasized this point:

*The talks in Astana are "an important contribution to... a comprehensive political settlement in Syria which will continue in wider activities in Geneva in early February."*

However, if neocon war hawks respond like the liberal robotons taking to the streets in various US cities, if the war hawks are as un-accepting of Trump's Russian initiatives or of Russia brokering a peace treaty while the US plays second fiddle, disruption or attempted disruption of the new administration can be expected. If the neocon response is anything like the liberal response, further unrest can be expected in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East. The fact

that ISIL and Jadhat Fatah al Sham (al Nusra Front), who maintain control of large swathes of Syria's oil fields, are not at the Astana meeting is indicative of a latent backlash waiting for Trump – these are forces who were, and have been, supported by neocons during the Obama administration. If Trump is unable to adroitly handle domestic opposition against Russia and Assad, opposition rising from war-hawks in his own party and from liberals on the left who will use the opportunity (who will do anything to put the new president in a quagmire) to disrupt his administration, the situation will grow worse, not better.

However, do not count the rising American majority out, the men and women who rose to put Trump in the White House. If the liberal neocon cohort has not learned its lesson, the same people who voted for Trump will themselves soon take to the streets in unprecedented numbers in support of their new president and of America's new peace initiatives. They are tired of war-mongering, of being lied to, of unpunished criminal acts, of disruption and constant belly-aching from hypocritical and spoiled extreme liberal leftists – they have simply had enough. If things continue as usual, "same old-same old", it can be expected that they will soon be heard from in a rising crescendo of support for peace and cooperation with Russia and other cooperating nations throughout the world as the promised *Era of Peace* dawns upon humanity.

President Trump and the United States have an opportunity to work with Russia and the global community toward world peace. But to be successful they must resign themselves to the reality that the neocon-neoliberal vision for a new American Century must be modified. The age of liberal global hegemony is coming to an end. Increasingly, the nations of the world are opting for national sovereignty and a restoration of traditional family values as the *Era of Peace* promised at Fatima continues to dawn upon the nations.

The United States can either adjust and cooperate or continue



suffering one foreign policy embarrassment after another. It is either cooperate for peace or, as concluded in the previous article, a continued fall into irrelevance, something the Americans are unaccustomed too. If this happens, due to lack of cooperation with Russia *et al*, the liberals [and their neocon allies](#) who help make it a reality will have something real to cry about.